

Another point to which I desire to call the minister's attention is the price paid by this company for prime green codfish. Because of commitments made by the government dried codfish are in great demand. I was astounded the other day to find out the prices being charged in my town for dried boneless cod. That is a luscious item if you have never tasted it. The cost at a retail store was thirty-seven cents a pound.

Mr. REID: Is there no price ceiling?

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): I do not know of any price ceiling. I was simply astounded when the dealer told me that the price was thirty-seven cents a pound. The fisherman gets three and a half cents a pound for the green codfish. I should not like hon. members to think there is no justification for a considerable spread between the cost of the green fish delivered at the pier and the price charged by the retailer for the dried product. There is a tremendous loss in processing, and there is the cost of handling, curing and distribution. The processor has his profit; the wholesaler who distributes, if it is not done by the processor, also has a profit; the retailer has a profit as well. There are thus three profits on the one piece of fish. I cannot conceive why there should be a spread of about 1,200 per cent; from three and a half cents a pound to thirty-seven cents a pound is a tremendous spread.

Let us say that the loss in processing is one-third. I am just guessing at that, although I have heard the figures. This would bring the cost of the fish up substantially. The other items to which I have referred would each take at least as much as the original price paid to the fisherman. The cost of transportation is an item. Even with the prices paid for dried codfish by the quintal of 112 pounds, either with the bone in or boneless, I cannot conceive that a price of three and a half cents a pound for the green product is adequate.

This is the situation that calls for remedy. I do not suggest a ceiling price, but I do suggest a floor price for the fisherman. He is the man I am talking about at the moment; he is the man who is entitled to a fair return for what, after all, is fairly arduous work. He has to go out in all kinds of weather. While the fishermen do not fish in the winter-time because that area is frozen, fall fishing is a serious and hazardous occupation. The best run of fish is in the fall. The fattest run of cod is always in the fall, and the same for the haddock. The spring haddock are thin and not nearly as edible. During the later part of September when there are many

[Mr. R. B. Hanson.]

gales and windstorms and into October when the weather is getting colder, this occupation is carried on under the most arduous circumstances.

I should like to have from the minister an undertaking that he will look into what these companies are paying to these fishermen who cannot fend for themselves. I hope they are organized in a cooperative, but I am afraid they are not. That is the only cure that I see for the troubles of which I would call the shore-line fishermen. They have no beam trawlers but fish in the old-fashioned fishing vessels. Each man will take a share and a group will get together and go in one small schooner. They sell their catch collectively and divide the proceeds among them after paying the expenses. A fishing trip cannot be very lucrative to them, selling their fish at 3½ cents a pound. Remember these men cannot fish in the winter. Most of them go to the lumber woods and that sort of thing in the winter. But fishing is their principal occupation, and their season is relatively short. I am going to ask the minister if he will institute an investigation into the prices paid by the Gorton Pew company of New Brunswick for green codfish to the fishermen on the Caraquet coast and see if he cannot alleviate a situation which I think is just too bad at this time when prices for primary products have at least reached a decent basis. They have not reached parity by any means in many cases, but here I suggest that there is no effort to get parity for the fisherman, having regard to what he has to pay for his fishing tackle, his lines and what-not, and what he has to pay for his bait. I think the situation with respect to bait is odious. The fisherman has to pay five cents a pound for cured bait. That seems to be entirely out of line with what he ought to have to pay.

Mr. NEILL: How much?

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Five cents a pound. I have the invoices.

Mr. NEILL: Dried herring?

Mr. HANSON (York-Sunbury): Semi-frozen herring. They do not stay in the freezer very long because there is such an active demand. That situation should not be allowed to continue. I am going to ask the minister if he will be good enough, with the authority conferred upon him by this item, to investigate these two problems and see if he cannot find a rectification and a cure. I have outlined them in sufficient detail I think for him to know what I mean. I have not the slightest doubt in the world that he will approach the problems sympathetically. There is a disease there that ought to be cured, and a little wholesome